

(A pair of adults was again sighted at the Keoladeo Ghana Bird Sanctuary, Bharatpur, by Dr. Sálím Ali and Mrs. Dilnavaz Variava on 11th January 1977.

The species would thus appear to be a regular winter visitor to this wetland, possibly overlooked earlier until once definitely identified.—Eds.)

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## 7. OCCURRENCE OF GREY JUNGLEFOWL AND RED JUNGLEFOWL TOGETHER

In the Nawegaon National Park (Bhandara District) of E. Maharashtra State, both Grey Junglefowl (*Gallus sonneratii*) and Red Junglefowl (*G. gallus*) occur together. The natural vegetation in this area primarily conforms to the 'Southern tropical dry deciduous' mixed type, and the flora is fairly rich and diverse.

The species commonly met with are *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Lagerstroemia parviflora*, *Butea monosperma*, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, *Bombax ceiba*, *Ougeinia oojeinensis*, *Cassia fistula* and *Adina cordifolia*. Teak occurs scattered among these species. Bamboo forms a dense undergrowth.

SUB-DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER,  
NAWEGAON BANDH,  
DIST. BHANDARA,  
MAHARASTHRA STATE,  
January 6, 1977.

M. B. CHITAMPALLI

## 8. OCCURRENCE OF AND SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE PURPLE WOOD PIGEON IN MAHARASTHRA (BHANDARA DISTRICT)

During the survey of salt-licks surrounding Itiadh Lake of Bhandara district (N.E. Maharashtra), I found three Purple Wood Pigeons (*Columba punicea*) descending to the ground to pick up earth pellets at a salt-lick at the time of sunrise. Later I saw them

descending to a salt-lick late in the afternoon also. I enquired with the local fishermen and two shikaris who reported that the Purple Wood Pigeon (locally known as *Kharmat*) visits this salt-lick regularly in the morning and late afternoon during winter. Although the

above habit has been recorded in the case of green pigeons, no such observation has been made about the Purple Wood Pigeon.

I found these birds gorging on berries of *Litsaea monopetala* which is distributed in the forest.

SUB-DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER,  
NAWEGAON BANDH,  
BHANDARA DISTRICT,  
MAHARASHTRA STATE,  
January 6, 1977.

Since this species has not been included in the chapter on Fauna in the MAHARASHTRA STATE GAZETTEER, 1974, it represents an addition to the birds of Maharashtra.

M. B. CHITAMPALLI

### 9. DEAD NILGIRI HOUSE SWALLOW IN A NEST

My friend and I went to Hotel Hampton, Coonoor (11° 21'N., 76° 49'E., 1750 metres above mean sea level) in South India, to ring nestlings of Dusky Crag Martin *Hirundo concolor concolor* (Sykes), on 10th September, 1976. Within 10 m of Crag Martin's nests there was another, similar, nest from which the tail of a bird was projecting out. It seemed that the bird was incubating (although at the time of incubation swallows, usually, face outward). We tried to photograph the bird from close by and the bird remained immobile which made me doubt whether it was alive. My doubts grew stronger when Mrs. Adige, the owner of the hotel, told me that she had seen the bird sitting in almost the same position a couple of days earlier. We managed to reach the bird with the help of a ladder and found it dead. It was a Nilgiri House Swallow *Hirundo tahitica domicola* Jerdon. The bird was absolutely dried up and as I held it the feathers started slipping.

There was no sign of physical injury or deformity in the body of the dead swallow. Only its dried up tongue was projecting out of the bill. The claws of one leg were slightly entangled with the nest materials, perhaps as a result of contraction at the time of death.

The nest was attached to a ceiling beam and wall of a passage between two sections of the hotel, and was about 4 m from the ground. The nest seemed to be old and might have been used as a roosting place by the bird.

As far as available literature is concerned there is no mention of such death in swallows which build saucer-like nest with open top. But Dr. Sálím Ali found two Redrumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica erythropygia* (Sykes) dead in a tubular nest (Himmatsinhji 1959). Himmatsinhji says, 'it appears that the birds had completed the nest, and one of them was incubating the eggs while the other one must have been busy putting the finishing touches to the structure. The only plausible explanation for this rather unusual mishap seems to be that one of the birds must have taken the last few pellets of mud late in the evening, and therefore on entering the nest to roost it must have tried to complete the days work. The result of this last-minute constructional alteration was that the entrance hole became too narrow and the birds thus unwittingly entrapped themselves, where they finally starved to death'.

Above explanation of swallows' death cannot be applied to the present case because the